



IMĀM ĀLĪ'S LIFE-MOTTO

Sayyid Ridā Ṣadr

Translated by
Sayyid Saeed Arjmand

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Sayyid Rida Sadr

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Translator's Foreword

...This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed my favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion Al-Islam...

The Glorious Qur'an 5:3

A great number of qualified jurists and so many Muslim scholars, who are lawfully allowed to explain or comment upon the holy verses of the Glorious Qur'an, have explicitly an idea in common. This idea is that the above-quoted verse which is here the beginning statement or the opening sentence of this present foreword implies and conveys a deep concept concerning the peerless personality of His Holiness Imam 'Alī (A.S.) who has been divinely blessed and favoured in some revelations descended unto Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.).

The present translation is indeed supported and enriched by the exalted Qur'anic verses that indirectly introduce and connote the great personal status of Imam 'Alī (A.S.) in the Muslim community and in the

history of the world.

The translator has therefore endeavoured to prepare a relatively helpful English copy for those who desire to quench their thirst for acquiring the undeniable truth pervading the life motto and biography of a peerless patriarch known to be the first Imam of the faithful Muslims.

Today, our country Iran is certainly proud of being directly under the auspices of Imam 'Ali's heavenly directions and his moral instructions. The existing religious leadership ruling this Islamic Republic is undoubtedly originated from the immortal source of the socio-political career of the Holy Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.) and is definitely fostered by the unique status of his immediate successor Imam 'Ali (A.S.). May Allah descend his abundant favours upon the true believers.

Sayyid Saeed Arjmand
Mashhad, Iran

Preface

His Holiness Imam 'Alī(A.S.) is actually a shining star in the sky of humanity and he is also a guiding light illuminating the dark path of all people. One will know Imam 'Alī (A.S.) much better when one's insight is more polished. People of today whether Muslims or non-Muslims (Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians) know this Holy Imam better than the people who lived in the past and wanted to judge Imam 'Alī's policy.

Some of those ignorant people used to abuse Imam 'Alī (A.S.) during their sermons from the pulpits.

Despite hearing those unfair insults, the congregation present there left the place indifferently and preferred to keep quiet. Shall we call such people human beings! They were actually ignorant persons or pretended to be unaware creatures. They had eyes, ears and tongues but they were either blind, deaf and dumb creatures or they deliberately acted as defective people. Heaven save us from them!!

The cognition of Imam 'Alī (A.S.) will provide prosperity for humanity. It is therefore deserving to

establish a branch of research concerning the exact personality and biography of His Holiness Imam 'Alī (A.S.) in the celebrated universities of the contemporary world.

Some erudites should undertake the task of researching more and more about the distinguished character of Imam 'Alī (A.S.)! Thus they may be able to understand His Holiness much better and then be qualified enough to introduce his Eminence to the world. Such an attempt will no doubt be unique and praiseworthy.

The writer wonders whether he has been capable of realizing and conveying Imam 'Alī's life motto in this short pamphlet. What a great honour for the humble writer if he is successful in this feat! Otherwise he will continue this work until he gains the expected results.

Sayyid Rida sa'idi

Qum, Iran

Ramadan 19, 1401 A.H

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I

IMAM 'ALĪ'S DIVINE BARGAIN

Imam 'Alī (A.S.) trades with no one but God. The Holy Qur'an mentions:

And of mankind is he who would sell himself, seeking the pleasure of Allah...¹

Qur'an 2:207

Commentators have emphasized that this holy verse was revealed to honour Imam 'Alī (A.S.), son of Abu Talib, in reference to the night of Laylatul Mabit in which he sacrificed his life for the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.).

The word sell implies some divine bargain here. A bargain is usually based on four factors.

The buyer, the seller, the merchandise and the price.

God the Almighty was the purchaser in this divine bargain, and Imam 'Alī (A.S.) was the devoted seller. Imam 'Alī's sweet life was the precious merchandise,

and the fixed price was but God's contentment.

To go into the details we have to study the following.

Man's instincts and his intrinsic desires are naturally restricted to his love for money and riches, his earnestness for providing temporal comfort, his tendency towards publicity and enjoying good reputation, his love for having children and finally his need to live long.

These are actually the most original desires of man. His other needs emerge next to these important ones which are vital to him. These original desires do not stand on an equal level, that is they differ from the viewpoint of necessity and substantial importance. The less important one must be put aside for the sake of the more important one. The objective replaces the means, and the latter may sometimes substitute for the former in this order.

Money itself seems to be some means which will be sacrificed (expended) in the way of acquiring physical comfort. It will be also spent for the sake of our children and for providing facilities for life. There are few people who believe in money as their ideal in life. But all people like living for its own sake. This is no doubt based on a natural desire to be alive as long as possible.

Now let's see which one is more important for a normal person: life or sexual credit? Views may differ here and opinions may contrast!! The sages sacrifice everything for their own "Selves" They say their beings are the dearest of all. The formerly mentioned holy verse emphasizes that there is something more valuable than life itself, something which is worth the devotion of body and soul. In this equation God's contentment is the divine objective while the dear life is the means of accession. Thus is actually what the broad minded people think of the true philosophy of creation.

Here we encounter a question:

Suppose that it is correct to devote one's life to God. How can one obtain God's contentment, if he dies ? It was previously mentioned that the accomplishment of a bargain depends on four factors. The lack of one will ruin the whole bargain. In the divine bargain the seller perishes, but what about the determined price!? Then such a phenomenon should not be called "a standard bargain."

The solution of this problem is as follows. Human life is not restricted to this temporal phase. There are more exalted phases of being and living. To logicians life is a doubtful reality with different levels and grades. Vegetative life is considered as the first stage

of living. Animal life is the second phase and Human life follows these two phases and stands at the top of this cone or pyramid. Such a life is not restricted to these passing days and nights. Otherwise it is not the same animal life which is not true living. A true life is something everlasting and perpetual. Eternity is attached to a real life which is actually prolonged in the Hereafter. The life of this world is based on secular needs like eating food, clothing and so on. Immortality water means but life after death and thus it is understood that the true life never comes to an end. It is therefore the best bargain to exchange this temporal life with what is called eternity. Eternal life means to sacrifice ourselves in order to join God the Almighty. There you need not have any eyes to see or ears to hear. The concept of distance does not exist in the Hereafter. Everything seems to be transparent in that phase of eternal life. Immortality water is nothing but God's contentment.

In the *Nahjul Balagha* (Peak of Eloquence) of his Holiness Imam 'Alī (A.S.) some good and pious persons are characterized as follows

*The virtuous people of Allah have made up their mind to leave and they have purchased with a little perishable (pleasure) of this world a lot of such (reward) in the next world.*²

Thus these people devoted their restricted lifetime in order to obtain an infinite period of immortality

His Honnness Imam 'Alī (A.S.) enjoyed many bargains with God the Almighty. His rich life covered a long period of self-sacrifice and abstinence. The night in which Imam 'Alī (A.S.) slept in the bed of the Holy Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.) in order to save the Prophet's life proved Imam 'Alī's pure devotion. There he had no partner to share the reward of his divine deed. Thence he was recognized to be the best example of a devotee in the school of Islam. In those days Imam 'Alī (A.S.) was only a young bachelor. He was but a twenty year old boy who entered into his first bargain with his Lord, and thence the world was eternally fragrant.

The Holy Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.) might have been murdered had Imam 'Alī (A.S.) not courageously undertaken that sort of bargain. That newly-emerged and sacred phenomenon (Islam) might have been annihilated too. On that night Imam 'Alī (A.S.) was lying in the bed of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) with no protection, such as weapons or armour. A disarmed warrior is surely braver than a fully - equipped soldier...

The Holy Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.) propagated his new creed (Islam) for 13 years in Mecca where the

isolators persecuted him and did not embrace his religion. Those pagans imposed famine and deprivation of the basic means of living up in the Holy Prophet (S A W) and his clan for about three successive years. The Holy Prophet (S A W) , however did not surrender and did not give up his divine calling. The Quraysh heathens assembled and exchanged ideas to eliminate that obstacle (the Holy Prophet) in their way of paganism. They even decided to murder the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) but no volunteer would risk his life for this feat. Some dualists proposed to imprison His Holiness until he died in jail. This suggestion was rejected too.

They eventually talked about his banishment from Mecca. This view was also considered hazardous due to the Prophet's perseverance and the unique eloquent orations he used to deliver in public, something which would definitely gather more followers. Then a big expedition of Muslims would assault and overthrow the isolators. The council of heathens from the Quraysh tribe finally decided to choose ten men from among their ten clans. Those ten were appointed to murder the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) at the proper time and place.

They actually intended to obscure the murder case leaving no trace and clue of the assassin. Thus there

would be no revenge and the like, except the necessary ransom for which they were all ready to accept the payment. They plotted to attack the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) in his bed at midnight.

Abu Lahab, the Prophet's uncle, was one of those vicious terrorists. He knew everything about the locality of the Holy Prophet's house, the gate of which was wide open all night long. Nobody knew of the mortal decision of that horrible council that had sentenced the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) to death. His Holiness Muhammad (S.A.W) was divinely ordered to secretly emigrate from Mecca.

The expected night befell, and someone was apparently sleeping in the bed of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). The ambushing Quraysh conspirators near the house of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) imagined that the Prophet (S.A.W.) was lying in his bed. They waited until midnight, the time they were going to commit murder in the deep dark with the intention of concealing the criminal act. They attacked the man in bed, but they found Imam 'Alī (A.S.) there instead of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.)

"Where is Muhammad (S.A.W)?" they asked.

"He has left Mecca," was the answer.

"Where has he gone?" they continued.

"I don't know. You did not like to have him in

Mecca, he therefore deserted the city all at once, replied Imam 'Alī (A.S.).

They suddenly decided to murder Imam 'Alī (A.S.), but their decision was disapproved of by some from amongst their own gang. The murder of Imam 'Alī(A.S) seemed to be unnecessary. They were actually in pursuit of the Holy Prophet (S A W) and intended to ruthlessly kill him.

Imam 'Alī (A.S.) proved his sincerity towards the Holy Prophet of Islam (S.A.W) and thus he could save the rich life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) who could afford prosperity for humanity and could also eradicate the roots of oppression throughout the world

The above true story may be called a divine bargain concluded by Imam 'Alī (A.S.).

There are too many divine bargains found in Imam 'Alī's lifetime. He was the seller and God was the purchaser of Imam 'Alī's merchandise. This merchandise was but self-sacrificing and risk - taking in the battle of Uhud in order to safeguard the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) who might have been injured by the enemies. This battle happened at the foot of Mt Uhud which looked like a long wall extended alongside the battlefield. The mountain itself was split by a rift

through which every warrior could easily pass. This passage was located in back of the Muslim army. It was therefore a proper hide - out from which the infidels' army could stab the Muslims in the back.

In anticipation of this danger the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) appointed fifty archers to guard the rift against the assault of the enemies. Those fifty archers were ordered to stick to their strategic positions on the mountain.

They were strictly advised not to leave their appointed positions under any unexpected circumstances, whether the Muslim army could win the battle or not.

The Muslim archers did not, unfortunately, obey the command issued by the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.)

Due to Imam 'Alī's unique bravery the Muslim combatants embraced victory in the heat of the battle.

The defeated enemy began to flee without being pursued by the Muslim soldiers who were busy gathering war booties. Thus the latter neglected to think of a new attack by the enemy who had suffered but light casualties. Only a few of their commanders were killed. On account of all this, the infidel, dispersed soldiers regained their spirit and assailed the Muslim warriors who were busy gathering war spoils, and did not care about what was going to happen.

The formerly mentioned patrols had abandoned their posts with the intention of seizing more and more booties. They did not obey their commander who wanted them to respect the order of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) In short everything was in disarray and the Muslim army had a serious problem due to some military disobedience. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) was left alone amongst the cruel pagans in the battlefield. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) approached the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) in order to help him in this hour of danger, the time and opportunity seized by the heathens to take vengeance on the Holy Prophet of Islam (S.A.W)

Defending the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) from every possible danger, His Holiness 'Alī (A.S.) repelled the invading pagans who intended to get near the Messenger of God with the evil intention of murdering him. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) was seriously wounded, but he did not pay the slightest attention to the fatal situation in which he was involved. The brave defender Imam 'Alī (A.S.) was going to faint and collapse due to excessive bleeding. His sword broke and was replaced by a new one Zulfikar. He knelt down several times, but finally regained the exhausted energy and thus rescued the Holy Prophet's life from an unavoidable mortal danger. Imam 'Alī's body was thoroughly

smearred with blood and covered with wounds when the fight was over.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) paid Imam 'Alī (A.S.) a visit in his bed. There the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) said He who devotes himself to win God's Grace will be blessed with magnificent divine rewards. On hearing this statement of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W), Imam 'Alī's reaction was both gladness and grief. He was glad that he had not fled from that horrible fight, and he was sad for not embracing martyrdom. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) told him that he would be martyred later on. The following day the seriously wounded Imam 'Alī (A.S) got up from his bed, and mounted a horse bravely and rode out to watch the enemy who probably intended to attack the Muslim army again. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) undertook another divine bargain with God the Almighty when he got engaged in the Battle of Hamra' al - Asad.

The great distinction of Imam 'Alī's bravery compared with other gallants and heroes of the world lies in his unique way of fighting. His Holiness never started the fight as the first invader in the battlefield. He did not challenge any warrior to fight against him, that is Imam 'Alī (A.S.) was always the second man who commenced a conflict. He was actually the defender and not the invader in all combats. He

practically answered as soon as he was called to the famous battles of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq, Khaybar, Siffin, Jamal and Nahrawan. Imam 'Alī(A.S) did not intrinsically like to slay people, even his enemies.

He had a heart made of gold, and that is why he preferred to be a defender rather than a ruthless warrior. Thus is what we call great dignity and unique virtue.

PART I

1- وَمِنْ قَتَائِمٍ مَنِ تَشْرِي نَفْسُهُ لِنَعْمَةٍ مَرْجُوبَةٍ

2. Sayyid ar-Radi, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Trans. by sayyid 'Alī Rida (Tehran, Iran: WOFIS, 1980), part 2, P. 369.

II IMAM 'ALĪ'S JUSTICE

*Before me the people used to complain of the oppression of their rulers, but now I have to complain of the wrongful actions of my people, as though I am led by them and they are the leaders or that I am the subject and they are the rulers.*¹

These words of Imam 'Alī (A.S.) require an explicit commentary that may make the saying clear for the reader or for the listener. The governing states that have been ruling over the peoples of the world might generally be divided into three categories:

- 1 - Despotism that implies the sovereignty of a single dictator over a nation.
- 2 - Rule of a minority over the majority of people.
- 3 - Government of the majority.

Despotism ruled over the peoples of the world for a long time, and it is still governing so many nations in the present era. Such a regime is but the sovereignty of

a single ruler over the subjects of a country. The personal inclinations of this ruler will affect any political policy under the disguise of legislation or religion. This very person will soon change into a selfish and dominant monarch or chief and the like. His rule will be undoubtedly based on tyranny as long as he lives. The oppression of the powerful tyrant will influence his minor representatives who are actually in charge of some official posts and may in turn trespass upon others' rights.

The rule of minority implies a political party which consists of some fixed individuals who act the role of leadership in a society. This sort of government is a newly-emerged concept in the present century, and it is also based on tyranny and aggression. Boundless personal inclinations will naturally cause some to trespass upon others' right of freedom. Such a government is actually similar to the formerly mentioned despotism which means the rule of a single monarch over a nation.

Here the people are considered as nothing and the selfish chief is officially the only powerful authority in the country. The powerful political party is also a horrible government which dictates whatever it determines as civil laws to the people who must be obedient subjects with no objection. Otherwise prisons,

jails, punishments and even executions will embrace the so-called traitors and out-laws!!?

The third form of government was clearly described by Abraham Lincoln: Government of the people by the people and for the people. Such a government is known as, "The National Government". The reason lies in the fact that this kind of rule is actually in the hands of the majority of people who govern a nation.

Nowadays this form of political regime is called Democracy which is much better than those two formerly - mentioned regimes. Here people's liberty is regarded as important by the government. But they are not allowed to be free in every walk of life. The press may oppose the government directly, and the government will not suppress the press for some unimportant criticisms. In such a political regime individual statesmen cannot put into action what they want.

This kind of rule is to some extent oppressive too. The majority here will trespass upon the rights of the minority of the society. The opponents of the government could be arrested or imprisoned under the accusation of high treason.

Thus it becomes clear that in these three regimes the ruling class is inherently oppressive although it seems to be a national authority directed by the people

themselves.

Imam 'Alī's rule was something quite different from those governments. It was neither a despotic rule nor a regime based on some political party or what is called "democracy". In 'Alī's political policy there was no trace of tyranny. His rule was in reality based on divine justice; something which could help the oppressed without any hypocrisy. This kind of government does not trespass upon people's rights, and the ruler will be loved by the people who may even hurt him. Now I see people doing injustice to rulers!! Well said, Imam 'Alī (A.S.).

The Statue of Liberty is a symbol of impartial judgement in today's world: this so-called angel is holding a scale in one hand, and there is a sword in its other hand... The scale here is the token of people's equality before the law, and the sword implies the just execution of that law with no additional pity or mercy granted to the guilty. To carry out the civil law precisely requires some harshnesses that is naturally a phenomenon contrary to gentle justice, which was Imam 'Alī's policy of administration.

His Holiness used to administer justice mercifully. That affection influenced both the oppressed and the oppressors who were going to enjoy the privileges of

true justice.

Now let's narrate the story of a man who was on duty to collect income taxes. He had direct orders from Imam 'Alī (A.S.) to be entirely friendly with the tax-payer. Imam 'Alī's good pieces of advice are recorded in the book Nahj al-Balaghah and here we quote:

Move on with the fear of Allah who is One and has no partners Do not frighten any Muslim. Do not pass over his lands so as to make him feel unhappy. Do not take from him more than Allah's share in his property. When you go to a tribe you should get down at their watering place instead of entering their houses.

Then proceed towards them with peace and dignity till you stand among them. Then salute them and do not be remiss in greeting them, then say to them, 'O servants of Allah, the vicegerent of Allah or his caliph has sent me to you to collect from you Allah's share in your properties. Is there anything of His share in your properties. If so, give it to His vicegerent.

If someone among them says "No" then do not repeat the demand. If someone speaks to you in the affirmative then go with him without frightening him, threatening him, persecuting him or oppressing him. Take what he gives you such as gold or silver (coins). If he has cattle or camels do not enter upon them save with his permission, because their major part is his. Therefore when you get there do not enter upon them like one

who has ill control over them or in a violent manner. Do not scare any animal, do not tease anyone and do not let the owner feel grieved about anyone.

Divide the property into two parts and let the owner choose one. When he has chosen do not object to it. Then divide the remaining into two parts and let him choose one and when he has chosen do not raise any objection. Continue like this till only that much remains which is enough to satisfy Allah's dues.²

Are there such regulations for collecting income taxes in the so-called democratic countries?

The Concept of Justice is in Contrast with That of Injustice

To trespass upon others' properties whether ordinary possessions or personal comfort and freedom, denotes injustice while justice implies self-restraint and avoidance of such an aggression. The application of self-restraint lies in having the power to trespass upon others' rights. The tyrant and the just should both be potent. Otherwise there will exist neither justice nor injustice in the world. The difference between the two powers however seems to be something observable. A tyrant has power over the oppressed, while a just person has power over others and over himself as well. The former lacks self-

control, but the latter tries to avoid aggression. An oppressor follows his devilish caprices while the just man stops such indulgences.

Anyone can easily act unjustly, but the administration of justice needs strong will and spiritual potentialities. The domain of oppression is too extensive and may encircle different sorts of people with different status and position. A disguised oppression which intends to act the role of favourite justice must be counted as the most repulsive type of injustice. Such an action is also a filthy sin committed by the most vicious villains.

This ominous sin or sinister crime has been a current policy adopted by the despotic regimes.

These oppressive governments have actually suppressed man's liberty under the false title of some invented freedom. Some tyrants have also repressed the pure doctrines of Islam under the name of some distorted legislation of this religion. These misled rulers or ignorant authorities fight against God in the Name of God!!?

The Khawarij (Muslim outlaws) are vivid examples in Islamic history. The Wahabis accuse the pure Muslims of being polytheists and finally the socialist governments suppress people's liberty under some title of invented freedom!!? Enchanting slogans are the

most effective policies adopted by these political cheats who try to deceive the simple - hearted youth.

Although His Holiness Imam 'Alī (A.S.) could act unjustly under some logical grounds, he did not commit any crime and did not aggress upon others' rights in the course of his brilliant life. There was no torture and the like among Imam 'Alī's prisoners.

For instance Imam 'Alī (A.S.) knew what was in Ibn Muljam's mind, the man who intended to murder Imam 'Alī (A.S.), but he did not punish the vicious villain before the committed crime. His Holiness believed that an evil intention should not be retaliated for.

There are three kinds of justice: personal justice, judicial justice, and state justice.

Imam 'Alī (A.S.) enjoyed those three privileges and possessed all of them perfectly. His Holiness had special regard for others' rights. He was actually an obedient servant of God, and thus he performed his religious obligations sincerely. In his judgements Imam 'Alī (A.S.) did not issue a verdict based on his personal sentiments such as affection or fury. He was always an impartial judge in every court case. A qualified judge never follows the prejudices of his personal creed and cult. He must not be a member of a political party and

the like. A young bachelor should not be appointed as a judge due to his youthful passions that may make him go astray. He then should be a married man with no ambitions for fame. A perfect judgement with all its proper conditions is what Imam 'Ali (A.S.) likes to establish throughout the Islamic societies.

Once someone reported Imam 'Ali (A.S.) to the second caliph. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) was called for by the caliph who addressed his Holiness. "O father of Hasan! Sit by your foe until we investigate the case." Imam 'Ali's face grew pale as if he was nervous. The caliph asked about the sudden change in Imam 'Ali's complexion.

His Holiness replied "I was annoyed when I heard that I was orally respected by you while my claimant did not receive the same courtesy and welcome."

An impartial judge should be impartial in every aspect of his judgement in the court. A strange person entered Imam 'Ali's residence and remained there as a guest for a few days. The man was actually expecting the other quarreling party to arrive. When Imam 'Ali (A.S.) found out about the man's intention, he humbly asked him to leave the house in which he had been a guest for some days. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) continued. "The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) has advised all judges to avoid receiving as a guest one claimant, while the other is

absent .

State justice implies administration of justice throughout a country and among all the subjects of that territory. Thus the security and repose of people should be provided by the government, and this is the fundamental right of a nation. People are to be free in their talks, actions, trades, journeys and the like, nobody's rights should be ignored by the ruling class and by the rascals in the society. An old woman with a purse full of jewels can easily travel from one place to another without being robbed by the vicious villains. This is the concept of perfect security and liberty that exists in a country which enjoys state justice. Such was Imam 'Alī's rule that protected the oppressed and miserable people. The repose or comfort people enjoyed during the rule of Imam 'Alī (A.S.) was a divine blessing granted to them.

A woman called Sudih narrated. "I reported an official of Imam 'Alī (A.S.) to His Holiness himself.

The Holy Imam was busy praying when I visited him. He kindly asked me of the case I told him about the official's tyranny. His Holiness burst into tears. He then said, "O my Lord: Thou art a good witness for me and my attendants. I have not directed them to act unjustly." His Holiness took some parchment and wrote the deposal of that official on it. I was ordered

to communicate the command.

In Imam 'Ali's type of rule an unoccupied official position or post is much better than an unfair tyrant sitting on some powerful throne. Postponed deeds are better than evil-deeds. Passing by the market of datesellers, Imam 'Ali(A.S.) encountered a weeping maid who wanted to return the dates she had previously purchased. The seller refused to accept the sold material. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) begged the man to cancel the bargain, but he received a blow on his chest instead!!

The people who were watching the scene informed the dateseller of his rudeness toward the caliph of the Muslims. The man got embarrassed and offered his apologies to Imam 'Ali (A.S.) He then took back the dates and returned the maid's money. He also insisted on receiving Imam 'Ali's forgiveness. "I am pleased with you, because you have administered justice in this bargain" replied Imam 'Ali(A.S.). His Holiness did not say a word of harshness to that man. This is an example of tender justice.

On a hot day Imam 'Ali (A.S.) was on his way home when he met a woman who complained of her menacing husband. His Holiness promised the woman to investigate the case as soon as the weather got colder. The woman, however, insisted on taking Imam

'Ali (A.S.) with her and said her husband would be more furious if she went home too late. His Holiness then agreed to go with the scared lady. On visiting her husband Imam 'Ali (A.S.) greeted the man and asked him to be kind and gentle to his wife. The ignorant man got mad and threatened that he would burn his wife ruthlessly. A scene was made and many passers by assembled there. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) was recognized and revered by the present congregation. The husband confessed that he was repentant, and promised to be kind to his wife as long as they lived together. Imam Ali (A.S.) was happy and advised that woman to obey her husband, and avoid any aggravation that would make the man go mad...

One of the characteristics of Imam 'Ali's rule was the freedom granted to his enemies. These vicious enemies of His Holiness lived in Kufah with full liberty and used to abouse the Holy Imam here and there.

On the contrary, Imam 'Ali (A.S.) did not take vengeance on them. The Holy Imam's followers were not allowed to revenge their insults, too. Sitting among his attendants in a congregation Imam 'Ali (A.S.) observed some of the men greedily looking at a beautiful woman who was passing by that assembly. His Holiness then said: "The eyes of these male ones are too greedy and this phenomenon will ruin them all.

If any of you feels something towards the opposite sex he'd better choose his own legal wife!!" Hearing this excellent statement a villan who was present there burst into anger and envy and suddenly started to swear at the Holy Imam and said: "O, this unbeliever is so knowledgeable that I hope his God kills him

Imam 'Ali's attendants decided to kill that pagan, but the merciful Imam stopped them. He added that he had been insulted by that ignorant person whose penalty was nothing but oral abuse in return. The Holy Imam forgave him generously.

Once during the performance of daily prayers Ibn Kuwwa, a hypocrite, loudly recited this verse of the Glorious Qur'an in order to taunt Imam 'Ali (A.S.)

*And verily it hath been revealed unto thee as unto those before thee (saying) If thou ascribe a partner to Allah thy work will fail and thou indeed will be among the losers.*¹

Qur'an 39.65

What he meant was that Imam 'Ali (A.S.) had become a polytheist and a loser. The Holy Imam remained quiet until Ibn Kuwwa finished talking. Then he wanted to continue the services, but again Ibn Kuwwa read the verse loudly. The Holy Imam became quiet. This was repeated a third time when the Holy Imam read this verse of Qur'an outloud.

So have patience (O Muhammad!) Allah's promise is the

*very truth and let not those who have no certainty make thee impatient.*⁴

Qur'an 30:60

Then he continued the prayer. One of Imam 'Ali's friends was present there and begged His Holiness to deliver some sermons. The Holy Imam spoke eloquently for a while, and that friend was so enchanted and excited that he suddenly collapsed and died. His Holiness then said.

"This is the effective result of an eloquent sermon."

In the course of his preaching in the mosque the Holy Imam was periodically insulted by some rogues and rascals who were present there. But His Holiness was not disappointed, and tried to give those villains proper and logical answers on the basis of quoting reliable verses of the Glorious Qur'an. They intended to overthrow Imam 'Ali's rule and deceive people with false slogans. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) was actually kind to them in return. His Holiness is the only oppressed ruler throughout the history of the world.

Imam 'Ali (A.S.) did not exploit people's emotions and sentiments. Thus he avoided the commitment of injustice. He was an eloquent orator as well as a brave gallant with extensive knowledge. He was also the dearest friend and follower of the Holy Prophet

(S.A.W.).

He was therefore qualified enough to influence people's thoughts. The world knows that Imam 'Alī (A.S.) did not commit any evil act in his whole brilliant lifetime. He did not take advantage of the mass media of his time. To exploit the emotions of the youth is a treachery to humanity, and here Imam 'Alī (A.S.) was not a traitor. He did not try to gain false popularity in order to be able to continue his rule peacefully. His Holiness used to reproach the wicked for their own good.

In short Imam 'Alī (A.S.) never deceived people to maintain the stability of his own political position. People in general do not like to be advised. They detest to receive directions directly. There is a line of poetry which says: Mind yourself, do not worry about me, as you will not be punished for my sins. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) followed his own heavenly policy. He showed people the straight path and advised them to avoid evil actions. He often walked through the bazaars and talked to the sellers about the bargains they had with purchasers.

Statesmen prefer to be demagogues when they fail to be qualified leaders. They actually endeavour to remove all the obstacles found in their way. They may accuse their opponents of high treason!! They even

avoid any profitable actions good for their country and the concerning people. They do not care about any disgrace.

PART II

1- ar-Radi, The Sayings, part 3, p.727

كُنْتُ حُبْتُ أَوْ الْأَمْرَاءَ بِظُلْمٍ لِلنَّاسِ، فَإِذَا النَّاسُ يَطْمَئِنُّونَ لِأَمْرٍ،

2- ar-Radi, Instruction 25 Part 2p.p. 537, 538.

3- وَتَقْدُّ أَحَدِي إِلَيْنَا وَالْأَقْدَبِينَ مِنْ قَتْلِكَ لَيْزًا أَوْ تَرْكِ الْبَحْثِ عَمَلِكَ، لَنْكُونَنَّ مِنْ أَحْسَرِيهِ

4- وَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ عِدَّتَهُ حَقٌّ وَ لَا يَسْتَحْصِيكَ أَقْدَبِينَ لَا يَرْفُونَ

III

IMAM 'ALI'S GENEROSITY

Which one is more preferable: bravery or generosity? Some prefer the former while the others approve of the latter. The first group claims that bravery implies devotion of one's life, but generosity covers only the financial expenditures made by an intelligent person. Money should be spent to save one's life which is naturally more valuable and is actually a gift of God. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) was at the same time the bravest and the most generous. An Arab poet writes:

No wonder that God is potent enough to bless a person with all virtues. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) was the noblest of all people. He enjoyed all privileges good men should be granted. He was but a unique soul!

His Holiness used to help the poor in any condition. He did not care about his own financial affairs. He heard once that Miqdad (a good Muslim) was starving. The Holy Imam went to the bazaar immediately and

sold his own armour to provide food for that needy man. Abu Hurayrah (a Muslim attendant) says "Once a severe famine prevailed upon the city of Medina, and I could not find any food to live on. I was forced to go to Abu Bakr in order to beg for some edibles as his needy guest. But I left him in despair. The next day I asked 'Umar to help me, but again I was disappointed. On the third day Imam 'Alī (A.S.) took me to his house and served me with adequate food." Abu Tufayl says "I saw Imam 'Alī (A.S.) who fed the orphans with honey..."

Once Imam 'Alī (A.S.) was hungry too. He had no money to provide some food. He then began to look for a temporary job to earn some money. On his way round there Imam 'Alī (A.S.) saw a man who used his camel to carry barrels of water with the intention of irrigating date palms. The cameleer agreed to employ Imam 'Alī (A.S.) who was to draw water out of the wells round about there and the wage was one date for a bucket of water. As soon as Imam 'Alī (A.S.) had a handful of dates he left his job and sent the dates to the Holy prophet (S.A.W.) He did not want to be questioned by the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) about the source of this income. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) worked as a labourer and thus he is appreciated by all toilers.

It is narrated that once, while residing in Mecca,

Imam 'Alī (A.S.) met a bedouin who had grasped the sacred hanging cover of the Kabah tight in his hands, and besought the Lord to bestow on him 4000 dirhams. His Holiness asked the man why he wanted that much money. The bedouin answered, "I am indebted 1000 dirhams. I will pay 1000 dirhams for the price of a house I intend to buy. 1000 dirhams will go for the dowry and the rest will be appointed as capital to run a business. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) requested that Arab to pay a visit to His Holiness in Medina.

On his arrival in Medina the bedouin searched for Imam 'Alī's residence. A young boy of that city directly showed Imam 'Alī's house to the Arab. The boy declared that he was Husayn (A.S.) son of Imam 'Alī (A.S.). Imam 'Alī (A.S.) was penniless at the time he met that bedouin. His Holiness therefore called for Salman and requested him to sell his palm-grove the trees of which had been planted by the hands of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.). Salmān carried out Imam 'Alī's order and brought His Holiness 12,000 dirhams, the money gained from the sale of that palm-grove. Four thousand dirhams were granted to that needy Arab, and the rest of that money went into the hands of the beggars of Medina who were informed of the story of Imam 'Alī's sudden richness. His Holiness was again a moneyless man when he arrived home.

Once when Imam 'Ali was in the presence of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.), the Prophet (S.A.W.) raised a question about Imam 'Ali's torn and worn-out robe.

What did you do with that vestment I gave you?" the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) asked. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) replied, "O Messenger of God! The other day I met a companion of yours who complained that he needed some clothing for his wife and for himself I preferred to give him that vestment rather than keep it for myself. May the Lord grant me a better one! Imam 'A. (A.S.) did not own an extra robe to wear!

Once His Holiness had some money which he granted to the needy people at four times and on four occasions. The first portion was granted during the day. The second portion was given at night, and the third was given secretly while the fourth or the last portion was offered in public. The following holy verse referring to Imam 'Ali's generosity was revealed.

*Those who spend their wealth by night and day, by stealth and openly, verily their reward is with their Lord and there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve.*²

Qur'an 2:274

This holy verse that implies Imam 'Ali's generosity explicitly emphasizes how beneficence should continue both secretly and openly if benefactors intend to help

others. A qualified Muslim is the one who endeavours to look neat while he is also brilliant in behaviour (body and soul).

A religion is a divine legislation. A true believer avoids ignoring such a law both latently and openly. He will obey God's creed in any circumstance. Religion is an external phenomenon as well as an inward feeling. If the mission of Islam was restricted to the improvement of people's consciences only, what did the message of the public prayers really mean then? The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) used to say his daily prayers five times in the open air and in public accompanied by his faithful followers. The pilgrimage of Hajj was void of meaning if its ceremonies were performed latently. If financial devotion was restricted to giving alms, then other welfare foundations like hospitals, orphanages and nurseries meant nothing in the school of Islam! If Islam was a concealed secret there would be no jihad (holy war) in this divine creed. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) and Imam Husayn (A.S.) would not have been martyred and offered their lives if their religion (Islam) was a hidden mystery.

The hypocrites pretended to be Muslims while they were but liars and were in reality brutal enemies of Islam and acted against the Holy Quran. To practise the rituals of a religion too extensively may create

some superficial notion that the mission of a divine creed is restricted to apparent ceremonies and superficial formalities. This may damage the basis of a religion. Imam 'Ali's policy indeed encompassed both obedience to God as well as adornment of appearance. God the Almighty may be revealed both in our hearts and on our tongues. His path is extended through our words and our deeds. To mix with people may also help us to reach God.

Now let's return to our main subject and see what was his policy in life. Once a beggar entered a mosque and besought the congregation assembled there to help him. Nobody paid any attention to that needy person. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) was busy praying in one corner there. His Holiness hinted that the beggar ought to approach him and offered that needy man the relatively precious ring he wore. The beggar left the mosque joyfully. While he was enjoying that munificence of Imam 'Ali (A.S.) the following holy verse was revealed as proof of this true story.

Your friend can be only Allah, and His messenger and those who believe, who establish worship and pay the poor due and bow down (in prayer).³

Quran 5:55

Imam 'Ali's divine guardianship is fully established

by the revelation of this holy verse. In the absence of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W), Imam 'Ali (A.S.) was truly the leader of all people, and this position was divinely granted to him. His Holiness was indeed the best of all. He deserved to hold that title of honour. The Messenger of God acted according to this holy verse of the glorious Qur'an. Thus Imam 'Ali(A.S.) enjoyed the Holy Prophet's patronage and was actually the Commander of the Faithful.

In the period in which he did not hold an official post, Imam 'Ali (A.S.) did not choose solitude. He worked on and on. As a farmer he planted too many trees and acquired a considerable amount of wealth. Upon his martyrdom and his departure, the remaining wealth as a heritage was but some 600 dirhams. For about five successive years Imam 'Ali ruled over the extensive Islamic territories. His yearly legal income seemed to be an amount of 40,000 dinars (gold coins). But he lived piously and preferred to be abstinent in all walks of life. Here an impartial judge as the reader of these lines will finally find out the obvious reason of Imam 'Ali's secular poverty. His Holiness was practically a munificent ruler and a generous Imam who did not hoard any money as other powerful rulers do. This short account will suffice him and all.

PART III

- أَسِرْ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَتَكَبَّرُ
1- أَنْ يَجْمَعَ الْعَالَمُ فِي رَحْمَةٍ
الَّذِينَ يُبْعَثُونَ أَمْثَلُكُمْ نَبِيًّا دَالًّا بِهَارِ صِرَافٍ وَعَلَايِهِ فَهُمْ لَشَرْعِهِمْ عِدَّةٌ رَيْبٌ وَلَا حَقٌّ عَنْهُمْ
2- وَلَا تُهْمٌ بِمُخْرَجِهِمْ
إِنَّمَا إِلَهُ الْبَشَرِ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُتِمُّونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَبَرَّاتِ الْوَكْفِ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ
3-

IV IMAM ALI'S RULE

Imam 'Ali's rule was actually based on infinite mercy and boundless affection. His Holiness had mercy upon his friends and foes. His way of ruling over people was practically the continuation of the Holy Prophet's rule which was a divine reign. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) was merciful and God is the Most Merciful. His Holiness Muhammad's behaviour towards his enemies was the pride of humanity.

the Quraysh people persecuted the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) as much as they could, while the Messenger of God was a benevolent person and intended to help them. The Quraysh clan's enmity menaced the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and his household up to the verge of death. The latter were deprived of daily sustenance for three successive years, and were permanently abused by the former clan. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) was

eventually forced to leave Mecca. He emigrated to Medina where he was still troubled by the horrible invasions of the infidels who killed his brave uncle and mutilated the dead body of that warrior. The Holy Prophet's cousin was killed too. Fortunately those conspirators did not find a good opportunity to kill the Messenger of God. Now let's examine what was the Holy Prophet's behaviour towards those pagans after the fall of Mecca and the victory of the Muslim army. The Quraysh heathens had to surrender, and the Holy Prophet's herald proclaimed that day was the day of mercy, and not a day of vengeance and spite. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) did not summon any accused infidel to be put on trial. The murderer of his dear uncle was also pardoned and spared. That devilish woman who had mutilated the corpse of his martyred uncle enjoyed the Holy Prophet's forgiveness too. Abu Sufyan, the chief of these pagans, received a big pardon and his house became a place of refuge. It was not long before he was also given 300 camels to share with his sons. Camels were too dear in those days. This was a short account of the Holy Prophet's rule when he was actually so powerful.

Once Shaykh Nasrullah saw Imam 'Ali (A.S.) in a dream. He said to the Holy Imam that after the conquest of Mecca, Abu-Sufyan's house would become

a place of refuge until the tragedy of Karbala and the Martyrdom of Imam Husayn (A.S.) and his companions. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) Replied, "Go and listen to the poem composed by Hays Bays the poet." Shykh Nasrullah got up and went to that poet and told him his dream. Upon hearing that true story the poet suddenly burst into tears. He swore that piece of poetry had just been written the night before and nobody was informed of that composition. The concerning lines are as follows:

*When the rule fell into our hands, we administered but justice and forgiveness. The time you were the rulers there ran but streams of blood! You preferred to slay the captives while we found it better to spare their lives. Thus will suffice to show our distinction over you.*¹

Imam 'Ali's behaviour towards his enemies was something unique that implied deep affection for all the people of the world. Upon his accession to the caliphate some plotted against him. The battle of Jamal was waged upon His Holiness by the commanders of Basra's army. They killed the treasurer of Basra and plundered all the cash stored there. What did Imam 'Ali (A.S.) do with them! His Holiness dispatched a delegation to those invaders to arrange some mutual talks, but his efforts were actually useless. A fight was consequently inevitable and those stubborn

people were finally overcome. Still the defeated enemies enjoyed Imam 'Ali's forgiveness, including Zubayr's son. Also, Imam 'Ali (A.S.) protected 'Aishah in the battlefield against the furious combatants. She was safely escorted back to Medina.

The following true story is recorded in history 'Amr Ma'di Karah, the famous Arab warrior, once approached the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.), embraced Islam and confessed that he was a true believer. On his way back to his tribe he captured the murderer of his slain father. He then took the captive to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and asked his Holiness to take revenge upon the assassin. "The blood shed in the Days of Ignorance will not be retaliated for in the era of the establishment of Islam," replied the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) 'Amr got angry and became an apostate. He left the place and on his way back home he plundered a Muslim clan. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) dispatched an army under the command of Imam 'Ali (A.S.) to pursue 'Amr who was ready to fight against the Muslims.

The gigantic apostate was fully armed when he stepped on the battlefield. On the other side, the Muslim warrior Imam 'Ali (A.S.) appeared with no sabre in his hand. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) roared so loudly that the coward infidel ran away from the battlefield.

and Imam 'Ali (A.S.) became victorious with no bloodshed. After some time 'Amr became repentant of his folly and again embraced Islam. Imam 'Ali's mercy upon his enemy rescued the life of an infidel who was a plunderer too. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) spared the life of an apostate who had rebelled against Islam and the Muslims.

Yemen has been considered to be an Arab country. The civilization of this land preceded that of Hijaz. The inhabitants of Yemen had not yet accepted the religion of Islam, and therefore, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) decided to dispatch Imam 'Ali (A.S.) to that territory in order to invite those people to Islam. Imam 'Ali's worthiness and his mercy upon those pagans caused a peaceful encounter which resulted in the conversion of those people to Islam without any bloodshed. Hamdan was the first clan which embraced Islam, and the other ones converted later. This honour should be granted to Islam and to Imam 'Ali (A.S.) who could summon a non-Muslim nation to accept Islam so peacefully. No conflict occurred and those new converts were all wise people and their deeds were based on logic and reason.

Other non-Muslim countries like Indonesia accepted Islam in peaceful conditions. Here we may mention some other countries as Malaysia, Bengal.

Kashmir and too many African countries. Fie upon those who say Islam's development depended on the unsheathed swords. Islamic swords were always used against the ever threatening enemies. There would have been no fighting if Imam 'Ali(A.S) had become the immediate successor to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) The Islamic state would not have become an Arabian Empire' The world would have been fully changed into some kind of utopia. Alas Imam 'Ali's policy was not followed fully enough. His way was just the same as the Holy Prophet's way which was nothing but Allah's straight path. God is the Most Merciful.

Imam 'Ali's policy was but avoiding engagement in conflicts which is approved of by God the Almighty. During his rule the following three battles occurred: Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan. Now let's examine what was Imam 'Ali's policy in these fights. First he did his best to stop the occurrence of any conflict and bloodshed. When he was informed of the departure of the chiefs and commanders of Jamal army, he immediately left Medina to negotiate with them. He also sent a letter to them in which he had given them good pieces of advice. Ibn 'Abbas was dispatched by His Holiness to negotiate with Zubayr who had a gentle nature. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) ordered his courier not to negotiate with Talha who seemed to be stubborn.

His Holiness continued, "Tell Zubayr of his change in behaviour and of his newly emerged hostility .17

The Holy Imam then sent a letter to those two old friends and relatives by a man called 'Imran b. al-Husayn al - Khuz'i. The contents of this letter are as follows,

Now both of you know, although you conceal it that I did not approach the people till they approached me and I did not ask them to swear allegiance to me till they themselves swore allegiance to me, and both of you were among those who approached me and swore allegiance to me. Certainly the common people did not swear allegiance to me under any force put on them or for any money given to them. If you two swore allegiance to me obediently, come back and offer repentance to Allah soon, but if you swore allegiance to me reluctantly, you have certainly given me cause for action, by showing your obedience and concealing your disobedience. By my life you were not more entitled than other Muhajirun to conceal and hide the matter. Your refusing allegiance before entering into it would have been easier than getting out of it after having accepted it. You have indicated that I killed Uthman, then let someone from among the people of Medina who supported neither me nor you decide the matter between me and you. Then one of us shall face (the command of law) according to (their) involvement. You should give up your way now, when the great question before you is only one of shame,

before you face the question of shame coupled with the hell - fire and that is an end to the matter`

The following is recorded in some books:

On his way to Basra, Imam 'Alī (A.S.) settled down in a territory called Zaviyah where he managed to say his prayers beseeching God in this way, "O Lord of heavens and the earth! This is Basra before me. I beseech thee to bless me with the service and benediction of these people. I seek refuge there from the evil of some of them. My Lord! These people have turned their backs on me. They have broken their vows O God! May thou savest the blood of the Muslims' His Holiness then addressed Ibn 'Abbas and said 'Go to 'Alha, Zubayr and 'Aisha and summon them to God the Almighty."

The old 'Ammar Yasir, being a distinguished companion of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) stood between the two armies, and announced to the Basra army "O people! You are not being fair enough by concealing your wives behind some shelters, and by bringing the Holy Prophet's wife as a vanguard to confront swords and arrows! "The old man then went to 'Aisha and asked of her intention. She answered that she was going to take vengeance for 'Uthmān's murder 'Ammar continued, "May God annihilate the tyrant, the rebel and the astray at this time!!..." Turning

his face to the army of Basra he shouted. "O people! You know better which group murdered 'Uthman!" Ammār was now a target for the enemy's arrows and darts. The answer to a logical statement was but shooting! He had to go back to Imam 'Alī (A.S.) and ask His Holiness to issue the order for an assaultment.

Despite a shower of arrows from the enemy's side, Imam 'Alī (A.S.) did not issue the command to wage war. His Holiness addressed his own army and said "Who is going to take this holy scripture (the Glorious Quran) to these people and invite them to it? He will be killed during this mission and I guarantee he will be an inhabitant of paradise in the Hereafter." A young warrior called Muslim volunteered to take the Holy Quran to the Jamal army. He fell down and died due to the shower of arrows and lances which pierced his body. The answer to a logical statement was death by spears!

Imam 'Alī (A.S.) ordered his men to be ready for a fight, but they were advised not to commence the conflict by shooting a single arrow nor by using their lances and their sabres against the army of the enemy. Imam 'Alī's brave general, Ibn Badīl, fetched the slain body of his brother whom the soldiers of Basra army had killed ruthlessly. The general complained of the murder and said: "O my master! How long are we

going to wait? These rascals are busy killing one after the other from our troops while we do nothing but watch the scene!"

Another dead soldier was set before His Holiness, but the order of attack was not yet issued. The Holy Imam stated: "O My Lord! thou be witness to what happens." He then turned to his men and asked them to have mercy on their enemies. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) disarmed himself, and mounted the mule of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) Thus he went to the battlefield and shouted "O Zubayr! Come to me". Zubayr appeared fully armed. Being informed of Zubayr's departure 'Aishah cried out "My sister Asma will soon become a widow!!" Zubayr was actually her brother - in law

'Asha was again informed that Imam 'Alī (A.S.) had gone there wearing neither armour nor arms. She became calm when she heard the true story. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) embraced Zubayr and asked him the reason for his rebellion. Zubayr answered "I intend to revenge 'Uthman's murder. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) said: "May God kill the actual murderer..." His Holiness gently continued, "Do you remember the Holy Prophet's prediction? 'Now you are the one who fights with Imam 'Alī (A.S.) and you are the tyrant'. Zubayr replied "May God forgive me, I would not have rebelled had I remembered the Holy Prophet's words."

The Holy Imam stated: "O Zubayr! Return now..." Zubayr replied "How can I return!? My retreat will be counted as a token of fright, and this is some disgrace which could not be cleared from my reputation. The Holy Imam added: "Return before bearing this shame along with the fire of hell" Hearing these words Zubayr decided to leave his army, but the cry of his son 'Abd Allah made him stop. The young boy asked his father the reason for his departure. Zubayr answered. "O my dear son! Imam 'Ali (A.S.) reminded me of some words I had forgotten. "The boy stated This is not true, you are scared of Ban Hashem's swords! The father replied: "No I have remembered what I have forgotten of my past days. Don't blame me of fear and the like". He then held his spear up and attacked the right wing of Imam 'Ali's army. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) ordered his men to fight against the rushing Zubayr who seemed to be provoked by some of his own people His Holiness asked his attendants to let Zubayr gallop around freely

The angry cavalier then attacked the left wing, and finally he rushed into the centre of Imam 'Ali's army. No one appeared before the wandering jockey! He then returned to his men and proved to his son that he had not been a coward! Imam 'Ali's mercy upon his enemies granted Zubayr the glory of a warrior.

The words of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) were not only addressed to Zubayr: He who fights against Imam 'Ali will be known as a tyrant. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) again entered the battlefield and called Talha. "Why did you rebel against me?" His Holiness asked Talha "I intend to revenge 'Uthman's murder," replied Talha. "May God kill the one who has participated in the murder of 'Uthman!" answered His Holiness. "Have you not heard of the Holy Prophet's statements?" His Holiness continued: "O Lord! May thou have mercy upon Imam 'Ali's friends, and have wrath on 'Ali's enemies. "Were you not the first who swore allegiance with me, and then you broke your vow?"

*So whosoever breaketh his oath breaketh it only to his soul's hurt,*³

Qur'an 48:10

Becoming repentant Talha said: "May God forgive me. I beseech Him to grant me a true conversion . Addressing his combatants the Holy Imam said "After the defeat of the Jamal division, you must not kill the injured, nor the captives, and do not pursue the refugees. Never take off their underwear?. Do not mutilate their dead bodies, and finally do not rob them only take the remaining booties in the battlefield" The defeat of his enemies was proved to

Imam 'Alī (A.S.). He did not, however, issue the command for an assault! Jamal's army rushed to the Imam's men forcing them to retreat cautiously. The necessary order for attack was eventually issued by His Holiness and Imam 'Alī's enemies suffered a big defeat as a result of that conflict! Look how noble His Emnence was. How merciful was he with his enemies!? Is there any other example in the history of humanity?

A ruler is so kind and compassionate with the rebels and outlaws who are but harmful creatures for him and his state! Let's have a look at his behaviour towards Mu'awiyah. We will have a large collection of letters if we endeavour to compile the ones he had sent to Mu'awiyah in order to show him the straight path which might have led him to the truth. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) did not intend to fight against that man. Now let's point out some kindness offered by Imam 'Alī (A.S.) in the battle of Siffin.

Siffin extended along the Euphrates river. When Imam 'Alī (A.S.) reached that territory his men requested him to block the flow of water to Mu'awiyah's army. The Holy Imam did not agree with that proposal. His Holiness let the enemy enjoy the required water. Mu'awiyah's army seized the opportunity and occupied that piece of land. He then

ordered his men to block the river against Imam 'Ali's army. Again Imam 'Ali's army made the enemy retreat and the river was in the possession of the Holy Imam. His Holiness ordered his men to let the enemy enjoy the required water. This continued to the end of the war. The battle of Siffin lasted for about 18 months. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) did not commence the major attack against the enemy. His Holiness expected his armed enemies to be filled with remorse and possibly retreat on the basis of some divine guidance. The result would have been the least amount of bloodshed.

Now let's have a glimpse at Imam 'Ali's conduct towards the rebels or the so - called (Khawarij). The best explanation about these people could be concisely stated that they were but stubborn creatures that intended to murder Imam 'Ali (A.S.) as their last objective. They at last succeeded in acquiring their ominous desire! They were similar to a sick gang with no logical intentions and reasonable grounds. They could not actually bear Imam 'Ali (A.S.) as an alive person who intended to administer justice in the world of that era. In the Battle of Siffin, although they were among Imam 'Ali's men, they suddenly changed their minds and drew swords against their own commander who could not eventually win the war due to this unexpected rebellion. These idiots were against

Mu'awiyah too, but their foolish deeds were automatically helpful for Mu'awiyah who had risen against Imam 'Ali (A.S.).

On account of all this His Holiness was forced to submit to arbitration. They did not accept the arbitrator of Imam 'Ali (A.S.). An enemy was then appointed as an arbitrator who later on was discovered to be a traitor; and this caused those people to become more hostile. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) did not show any reaction to whatever they said and whatever they did! His Holiness practically ignored them.

Impatient of the whole event, the companions of Imam 'Ali (A.S.) tried to retaliate for the insults and abuses of those ignorant people. Imam 'Ali's followers requested him to let them punish those rascals. They begged His Holiness either to suppress the rebels or imprison them: something which might have restricted their future evil activities. Imam 'Ali did not, however, consent and said: "As long as they are not too troublesome, we will not bother them and their wages and their financial shares will be paid to them. They are allowed to enter the mosques and say their daily prayers. If they proceed to murder innocent people, then we will retaliate". Those vicious rebels, who could not endure the presence of Imam 'Ali (A.S.), abandoned Kufah and marched out toward Nahrawan

in a throng. They were free to do anything they wanted, and Imam 'Alī (A.S.) did not prevent their movements whatsoever. On his way to fight against Mu'aviyah, His Holiness Imam 'Alī (A.S.) sent a letter to the Khawarij (the so - called rebels) and asked them to help him in a fight against their common enemy. But Imam 'Alī's proposal was rejected, and they declared war against his Holiness in return. Still His Holiness ignored those rogues, and preferred to march toward Syria. His Holiness did not consent to remove that obstacle.

Reports conveyed irritating tidings. The rebels had started invasions here and there causing people to insult Imam 'Alī (A.S.) in public. They would have killed disobedient persons who did not like to abuse their Holy Imam. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) returned to Nahrawan without having an intention of waging war upon those rebels. The Holy Imam decided to deliver good sermons which might have had some influence upon those people. Some submitted while the others went back to Kufah to plot against him. The rest remained with an evil intention in their minds of imposing war against Imam 'Alī (A.S.) While attacking Imam 'Alī's army they shouted this slogan:

"Be happy and go to heaven."

Only after a soldier from his army had fallen down

did the Holy Imam issue the command for assault and the enemies were defeated.

This is a short account of Imam 'Ali's behaviour towards his domestic enemies. His policy was just the same as that of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and the Holy Prophet's policy was simply to follow the Straight Path of Allah. In the Islamic state every individual can enjoy so many privileges. They will enjoy various privileges including financial aid, and thus they will feel tendencies towards Islam and its legislation.

This matter is pointed out in the Glorious Qur'an when the question of alms is raised. It notes that alms-giving wins the hearts of the opponents and may be given to...

*Those whose hearts are to be reconciled...*⁵

Qur'an 9:60

Once Imam 'Ali's mail was lost. Later on it was found near a Christian chap who claimed possession of that armour. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) made out his case before the judge in charge. His Holiness added "This is mine, and I have neither sold it nor have I given it away to anyone... Addressing the Christian man the judge said, "How do you counter the caliph's claim?" This is my mail and you observe it in my hands, answered the man

"The caliph may be right, but he could have made a mistake in this case," continued the Christian chap. Looking at Imam 'Alī (A.S.) the judge said: "You are the claimant and you need a witness to testify to the case. Have you any?"

No, I have no witness," Imam 'Alī (A.S.) replied. The verdict was then issued in favour of that Christian man who took the armour with him and left the court. Taking a few steps out, the man suddenly began to shudder. He was actually filled with horror! He then returned to the court and confessed before the judge that the mail belonged to Imam 'Alī (A.S.). The man stated: "This state is a divine state governed by the Holy Prophets."

He then embraced Islam and became a sincere companion of Imam 'Alī (A.S.). The man had become a warrior who attended Imam 'Alī (A.S.) in the battle of Nahrawan. The famous Arab writer Taha Husayn in his work called "Imam 'Alī (A.S.) and His sons" gives the following explanation: Some refused to swear allegiance to Imam 'Alī (A.S.) as the caliph of the Muslims. His Holiness did not make them do so, and ordered his companions to do the same thing. In short Imam 'Alī (A.S.) did not exert any force on them. No other caliph has ever done this to his subjects. Taha Husayn writes:

Imam 'Alī (A.S.) did not compel people to remain under his political direction in Iraq and Hijaz. There were too many who left him and went over to Mu'awiyah's side. They preferred the secular world to the divine creed. They were entirely free and not hindered by Imam 'Alī (A.S.). Also His Holiness did not force people to take part in different battles.

Now let's have a look at Imam 'Ali's policy towards sinners and criminals. The following true story is recorded in the famous book called Al-Kafi.

A man came to Imam Ali (A.S.) and begged His Holiness to purge him of his sins of pederasty! Imam 'Ali (A.S.) said: O man! get up and go out! you must have had a dream!..."

The next day the same man came to Imam 'Ali (A.S.) and confessed to what he had done. His answer was the same as before. On the third day the story was just the same as it was on the two days before. The man uttered confession to the commitment of that sin on the fourth day. The confession was actually repeated four times by that pederast who had to undergo the death sentence according to some legitimate article in the Islamic legislation.

Addressing the guilty chap His Holiness Imam Ali (A.S.) said:

"O man! The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) has already

determined three different ways of killing a condemned pederast. You can choose the way of being punished which you prefer

A single blow with a sword on your neck.

Being thrown down from a high hill with hands and feet bound.

Being thrown into a flaming fire and being burnt to death"

He asked Imam 'Ali (A.S.) "Which one is the most violent way?" Imam 'Ali(A.s.) answered, "Being burnt in the fire. The man continued," O master of the faithful! I Prefer to be burnt."

Imam 'Ali (A.S.) said "Be prepared and get ready. The man said," I am ready, "He then got up and began to say his prayers beseeching God to bless him with His favour

O my Lord! thou knowest I have committed an awkward sin of which I am scared and repentant too. I went to the Holy Prophet's successor in order to be purged of sin. He Proposed that I choose any of the three ways of being punished. O my God! I chose the most horrible way of being executed. I did so to be spared of the fire on Resurrection Day..!" Shedding tears the man got up and marched to the pit that had been dug and prepared for him to be burnt in.

Imam 'Ali (A.S.) suddenly burst into tears, and the

present congregation also wept sympathetically. The man's guilt was divinely forgiven, and His Holiness Imam 'Ali(A.S.) told him "Angels shed tears for this case of yours and you are divinely pardoned. Go happily about your business and do not do anything like this again".⁴

PART IV

1

مِنْهُ مَكَارِ نُفُوسٍ مَا سَحَتْ فَلَمَّ مَلَكُكُمْ سَلَّ بِسَدِّهِ الْفُضَحُ
 حُلُمُهُ قَبْلَ لَمْ يَرِ مَنَالُهُ تَمَرُّ عَلَى الْأَسَارَى فَتَحَقُّوْا وَتُضْمَحُ
 وَرَبُّكُمْ عَدُوٌّ الشَّيْطَانِ فَكُلُّ أُنْفَاءٍ يَأْتِيهِ الْفُجُورُ يَضْحُحُ

2- al-Radi, Part 3, P 621, 422

3- مَنْ نَكَبَ فَإِنَّهُ سَكَّتْ حَسْرَتُهُ

4- الرِّوَاغُ لِرَاحٍ إِلَى حَتَّةٍ

5- الْمَرْئِيَّةُ قُلُوبُهُمْ

6- al Kuisymi ar-Radi, Muhammad b. Yaqub b. shaq.

Al-Kafi (Tehran, Iran: World Organization for Islamic Services, 1980), vol. 7, p. 201

IMAM 'ALI'S SERVITUDE

The worship of God implies absolute obedience and pure servitude offered by a faithful believer. This type of worship does not mean slavery or human bondage. Servitude is based on free will while slavery is something compulsory imposed on mankind. The former is the result of one's consent, and the latter is the consequence of some exerted force.¹ In Nahj al-Balaghah (Imam 'Ali's sermons, letters and sayings compiled by sayed Radi), we can observe the following aphorisms.

A group of people worshipped Allah out of desire for reward. Surely this is the worship of traders. Another group worshipped Allah out of fear. This is the worship of slaves. Still another group worshipped Allah out of gratefulness. This is the worship of free men. This worship is restricted to the noble believers.¹

Gratefulness originally settles in the very depth of the heart and manifests itself in one's discourses as

well as in his deeds. All this depends on some true cognition of life and divinity. Otherwise there will be no thankfulness and the like. The more cognition spreads the more gratefulness will emerge. Fear and hope are offsprings of true cognition. An ignorant person does not recognize the concepts of fear and hope in the message of human creation. Such a person is not counted as a qualified servant of God. He is actually ignorant of the creator's power and thus he is no more thankful to Him! There are different ways of worshipping God. The Almighty Imam Ali (A.S.) practised them all. His Holiness was actually a perfect and obedient servant of God the Glorious. The help of people is considered to be an act of worship if it is offered for the sake of God.

One should not expect to be rewarded by people. This is regarded as some sort of secular business, and not the divine servitude. A true servant of God constantly feels that he is honoured by being present in God's threshold. He observes none but the Great Creator. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) was blessed with the sacred title, The servant, in the Glorious Quran. Imam Ali (A.S.) spent his enriched life worshipping God the Almighty and granting services to the people around him.

Servitude means giving up caprices and it simply

implies absolute obedience to God. Silent praying with the intention of acquiring God's grace through perfect subjugation is known as some sort of servitude. True servitude implies self-sacrificing and divine attachment as the most desirable aim in one's lifetime. One ought to forget his 'self' in order to be dissolved in divinity.

Practising daily religious services latently or in public, in the company of others or in one's solitude is also a kind of servitude. It is an obligation upon the shoulders of a believer. Thus the believer may manage to have a direct line towards divinity. They say the starting point of this line lies in the very depth of one's heart and its continuation passes through one's discourses and one's deeds. Yea! Man may establish communication with God through pure worship! Daily prayers are known as the best type of worship by which the faithful servant opens talk with God the Almighty. Saying prayers is the token of pure humility and absolute subjugation on the part of a qualified servant of God. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) was the most faithful believer among those who used to say their daily prayers regularly. While busy praying he forgot his own self as if he were observing God.

Once a Jewish scholar asked Imam 'Alī (A.S.) the following question, "Have you ever seen God whom

you worship!?" "I do not worship the God I have not seen," answered His Holiness. "How have you seen Him?" continued the Jew. "You are not able to see God with the help of these two natural eyes" He is visible through pure insight and in all holy hearts" replied Imam 'Alī (A.S.). The renowned Persian poet Jāmī has composed a piece of poetry in praise of Imam 'Alī's practice of praying before God.

"In the battle of Uhud Imam 'Alī's body was pierced with an arrow which had firmly lodged in his body. Much as they tried they could not take it out due to Imam 'Alī's inability to withstand that operation. The arrow was finally brought out while his Holiness was saying his prayers. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) did not feel any pain as he was dissolved in divinity during the performance of his obligatory duty."

In the famous book *Nahj al-Balaghah* this silent prayer offered to God by Imam 'Alī (A.S.) is quoted: "O my Lord! my prayers and devotions are not based on my fear of the fire of hell nor on my love for the paradise. Thou alone art worthy enough to be worshipped..."

Zararah bin Zamreh al-Laysi a dear companion of Imam 'Alī describes him to Mu'awiyah. The time Imam 'Alī (A.S.) spent with us he appeared to be just a close friend whom we could easily visit and associate with. There was neither a closed door nor a special guard to

separate Imam 'Alī (A.S.) from his companions. His glorious countenance, however, seemed to be a barrier which kept us gracefully away from him. His Holiness used to keep a permanent smile when he was attended by us in a meeting and the like. His face represented the mercy of his heart. He was vigilant all night long reciting holy verses of the glorious Quran which he read in the daytime as well.

Once at midnight I observed him praying in the sacred adytum. His Holiness looked like a wretched person. I heard him say:

O world! the beautiful bride. You have come to me! You are showing yourself off to me! Please go away. I need you not. You are divorced for ever. His Holiness then added: *Woe is me! What about this long journey with inadequate provisions in my knapsack and a rough road ahead!* ¹⁷

It is related by Nawī al-Bikāhī that *I saw that one night Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him), came out from his bed and looked at the stars, then he said to me: "O, Amir al-Mu'minin, are you awake or sleeping?" I said: "I am awake." Amir al-Mu'minin. Then he said:*

*O Nawī! Blessed be those who abstain from this world and are eager for the next world. They are the people who regard this earth as a floor; they recite the Quran in low tones and supplicate in high tones and then they are cut off from the world like Jesus."*¹⁸

The following is another quote related from Imam 'Alī(A.S) "Since I was told by the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) that nocturnal prayer is but pure light I have never neglected such a holy practice.' His Holiness added that he had said that prayer during the night at Laylatul Harir when he was busy fighting against the enemy until morning.'

It is said that Imam 'Alī (A.S.) had planted one thousand date palms with his own hands and he used to say his daily prayers under the shadow of those trees alternatively. His Holiness used to say his legitimate prayers in the mosque, at home and in the open air. Mosques are not the only places of worship. The surface of the earth is some altar on which a believer may worship God the Almighty. The Christians who assume churches to be the only shrines for ceremonies, do not actually follow Jesus Christ who thought of devotions differently. These people prefer the weekly performance at the churches and do not practice their religion throughout the week. The Muslims who think that assembly prayer is some ceremonial phenomenon do not practically follow Imam 'Alī's way of servitude. They are not good followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). True servitude originates from the very depth of one's heart and then manifests itself in practice. Ceremonial devotions should not be

counted as genuine servitude.

PART V

1- ar - Radi, *The Sayings*, Par 3 p. 711

2- Shaykh Ahmad Abdar Rahman Jami, *Diwan Kamil Jami*.
(Tehran, Iran: Intisharat Piruz.

روز ایست چون صف هیا گرفت	بیر محال به پیش حاکم
غیبه پیکان به گل از دهت	صد گنج به گل از مکتب
روی عبادت سوی معراج کرد	— به درت را صاحب کرد
حجر از عین بده احد	چاک به تن چون گلش انداختند

3- Allamah Muhammad Bagir al Majlisi *Bihar al-Anwar*
(Tehran, Iran: Dar al-Kitab al-Islamiyah, 1985), vol 41 p. 120
121

4- ar- Radi, *Part 3*, p. 678.

5- ar - Radi, *Part 2*, p. 262.

VI IMAM 'AH'S POLICY

Thinkers and theorists have a difference of opinion when discussing the question of means and aims or objectives in general. Is it approved and allowed to achieve a feat regardless of the way or means of achievement? Should a holy goal be gracefully accomplished?

Do people care about the quality of the means?

Are we free to do anything to reach a sacred objective?

Are we responsible for the sanctity of the concerning means which may be very helpful in an enterprise?

Is a man permitted to commit a sin with the intention of enjoying some exalted objective? Shall we not count such a devilish policy as 'a sin'?

Communists (the left wing) do not care for the quality and kind of the means used to reach a goal. Imam 'Ah's policy is entirely different!

His Holiness never used a despicable means to obtain a beneficial result. Honesty implies avoidance of the commitment of some evil action at the time one is capable of doing it. Justice means abstinence from committing a sin. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) always walked on the straight path to reach the truth. He never did choose the wrong way to attain success. It has been quoted from Imam 'Alī (A.S.)

*Do You command me that I should seek support by oppressing those over whom I have been placed. By Allah I won't do so as long as the world goes on and as long as one star leads another in the sky.*¹

Historians have unanimously recorded that His Holiness Imam 'Alī (A.S.) represented himself as the immediate successor of the Holy Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.). To him others were but usurpers. But His Holiness did not accomplish his personal objective deceitfully. He actually helped those three caliphs before him and they respected him too. Once "Umar, the second caliph, said:

"If 'Alī (A.S.) had not helped me, I would have perished."

There was a rumour that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) had not left a last will and testament. Despite all this, the impartial historians and the qualified researching erudites confess that Imam 'Alī (A.S.) was introduced to Muslims and companions of the Holy Prophet

(S.A.W.) as the immediate successor of the Holy Messenger of God. As we have previously mentioned Imam 'Alī (A.S.) could have gained accession to the seat of caliphate by means of deceit or by some other ploys which he did not like to exert. The immaculate Imam will never commit a sin or the like in his lifetime. He was a righteous person who hated bribery and other evil actions. thus rogues and rascals did not like him and plotted to murder this faithful servant of God.

PART VV

1. ar Radi, part 2, p. 264.

أشركوا في ذلك ما ليس لهم به علم فأولئك هم المفلتون

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[illegible]

VII

IMAM 'ALIE'S MARTYRDOM

Imam 'Alī's martyrdom is definitely a manifestation of man's justice throughout the whole history of the world. Imam 'Alī's life was a representation of justice and his martyrdom was also a token of this humane quality. He himself was a man of contradictory emotions and behaviours. His martyrdom should not be judged as a mere death. His decease was more exalted than ordinary life. But people said that Imam 'AL (A.S.) died just as other human beings and living creatures do when the time of departure arrives.

Here we intend to glorify a person whose death was quite different from that of others. That incident was a unique phenomenon. His Holiness knew who was going to murder him. That devilish conspiracy was disclosed to Imam 'Alī (A.S.). He therefore could sentence the accused person to death or imprison him. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) was able enough to banish that terrorist to a remote region in order to save his own

life. But he did not find it honest to punish someone who had not yet committed murder.

Once His Holiness was taking a bath when he heard his two sons Imam Hasan (A.S.) and Imam Husayn (A.S.) making a lot of noise outside the bath. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) asked them the reason for their shouting. They answered that they were worried about his life when they had seen Ibn Muljam the murderer moving round there. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) said! "Leave him alone." Imam 'Alī's murder is the most dreadful crime committed by man, and his assassin is the most vicious criminal of the world. That brutal murderer, who received but mercy and kindness from Imam 'Alī (A.S.) had forgotten everything. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) was murdered while practising his religious obligation (dawn prayers) in a mosque the abode of God and His angels. His martyrdom happened in Ramadan (the fasting month) and on the evening of Qadr (a holy period)! Fie upon such an evil thought! Fie upon Time. Fie upon human species (mankind).

At dawn on the 19th of Ramadan in the year 40 A.H. (661 A.D) this horrible crime occurred in Kufah mosque. The most righteous believer was martyred by the most vicious villain who used his devilish sword for this murder! Imam 'Alī (A.S.) survived three days after receiving that mortal blow. He would have forgiven the

striker if he had remained alive. His Holiness made the following recommendations about that vicious person who had intended to murder him. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) emphasized: "Be careful you do not torture that man, neither beat him nor abuse him. While retaliating do not inflict upon him more than one blow of the sword. True believers must execute legal retaliation in order to preserve prosperity for mankind on earth: this is a divine decree according to the Quranic Holy verses: "Never spread rumours that I have been ruthlessly killed, something which may instigate people to cause trouble and kill one another". His Holiness intended to save other people's lives which were at stake due to the fanatical prejudice of some ignorant Arabs and their untamed traditions.

There were some narrow-minded persons who really tried to annoy His Holiness when he was alive. These people let out their enmity upon Imam 'Ali's grave after his martyrdom! Imam 'Ali's funeral procession was escorted in the dark of midnight, and his holy corpse was buried in a secret grave unknown to the outsiders who might have acted devilish roles! Imam 'Ali(A.S.) was born in the House of God (Ka'ba) and was martyred in a Holy shrine (Mosque of Kufah) too the mosque which is believed to be God's abode. Imam 'Ali's life had a divine beginning and a

divine end. He was always present in the threshold of God as a faithful servant. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) paid strict attention to the hours of night (nocturnal praying and the like). He was stabbed at night and died at night too. His Holy body was buried in the dark of night.

Is night a sacred time compared to daytime? His Holy corpse was escorted by his sons and a few close friends who buried it in an isolated piece of land unknown to his enemies. Imam 'Ali's loyal friend – weeping Sa'ad b. 'Suhan al-'Abdi' accompanied to the holy grave and took a handful of dust to throw on his head. His other hand was on his heart when he grievously uttered

"May my parents be thy ransom O my master! How full you have been.

You were chaste when you were born. You lived a pure life and you were immaculate upon your departure.

Your perseverance was unique.

You were courageous in your Holy fights.

You made profits in your bargains with God.

You eventually succeeded in visiting divinity.

You were divinely welcome, and your eternal abode was furnished at the threshold of God where His angels attended you sincerely.

Your honourable position was just like that of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.).

*You are both sharing a single dwelling in which you toast
your goblets to the truth that will quench your thirst eternally.*

*..I beseech God to bless us with the honour of being your
followers.*

*we like to be friendly with your friends, and cast hostility
on your enemies.*

May God make room for us among your friends.

..O Commander of the Faithful!

*Nobody has ever attained your rank. Your true faith was
unique that is no other believer possessed such a pure inward
feeling!*

*You did fight in the company of the Holy Prophet
(S.A.W.), and you endeavoured much to establish the divine
religion and the related traditions.*

*You did eradicate treacherous revolts. Thus Islam was
fortified, and the true faith was enriched.*

Hail to thee. My best greetings to you,

..O Commander of the Faithful!

You were as a pillar of the Muslim community

*.. and you were the torch bearer in the Straight path of
God.*

*No other person possessed your pure qualities and your
personal virtue.*

*You were the first man who accepted the Holy Prophet's
summons and you willingly embraced Islam, the religion to
which you devoted your life.*

You were the first believer who assisted the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) cordially.

You put your life at stake to rescue the Holy Prophet's life.

You were the only warrior who fought against the brutal enemy so bravely. God suppressed the rebels with your sword Zulfighar, and perished the pagans in their fortresses with your hands.

O Commander of the Faithful how blessed are you! You were the nearest companion of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W), and you were the most learned of all his attendants...

God hath blessed thee with an exalted position along with a distinguished rank. You were the best Muslim with the purest faith. You were the bravest of all, and the most loyal devotee.

You were always the pioneer in every walk of life, and you were the first to attain prosperity.

May God bless us with your friendship, and protect us from fools!

I swear that you were the key of all treasures and the lock to all evils. We miss you much. Had people obeyed you, they were eternally prosperous. But alas!

They were ignorant from the top of their heads to the tip of their toes.

Sasaf then cried out and burst into tears. The present audience wept too and offered Imam 'Ali's descendants the necessary condolences.¹

One night Imam 'Ali (A.S.) saw the Holy Prophet (S A W), in his dreams. The former complained about some people to the latter who directed him to imprecate a calamity upon those wicked villains. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) cursed and said: "O my Lord! take my honest policy from these ignorant people and let them be misled by others. This imprecation is to some extent the most ominous of all expressions of this sort. A person who does not have any regard for a good blessing will soon be deprived of it. One should endeavour to preserve the granted gift, he will be otherwise repentant for the sudden loss of that gift. Time's unfaithful and will pick the buds of May, the flowering month ruthlessly. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) was taken away by man's brutal hand! His Holiness was actually the flower of humanity. How miserable is he who destroys his single cosy shelter with his own hands! He will no longer be a happy fellow!

Studying the story of Imam 'Ali's martyrdom will clarify some judicial points and a few cases concerning the criminal law. 1) Intention of committing a crime does not imply the occurrence of a murder case and the accused should not be sentenced. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) was aware of Ibn Muljam's evil intention. Some other people were aware too. They knew him quite well. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) did not, however, call him a criminal

before his commitment of murder His Holiness did not imprison that man, neither did he banish him. That vile man was free to go everywhere he liked, and no one tailed him.

2) Imam 'Alī (A.S.) did not issue a verdict of guilty for Ibn Muljam who should have received the obligatory retaliation. His Holiness said, "If I die you give him but one stroke, whether he is killed or not. He has stricken me once" Imam 'Alī (A.S.) did not intend to take vengeance on that ignorant terrorist. He did not therefore, insist on killing that wicked chap.

3 'Ashath Qays (another rebel) who played a role in that criminal conspiracy was not arrested after Imam 'Alī's martyrdom. That conspirator accompanied Ibn Muljam to the mosque where Imam 'Alī (A.S.) was stabbed by the latter. He awakened the vile murderer so he could seize the proper opportunity to rush to the Holy Imam at dawn Hujr Ibn 'Adī, Imam 'Alī's companion, who was busy praying during that daybreak, discovered the evil intention of that terrorist and warned him to change his mind Hujr left the mosque instantly and walked quickly to Imam 'Alī dwelling in order to inform His Holiness of the whole plotted treason. He was shocked when he heard that Imam 'Alī (A.S.) had chosen some other direction to the mosque. The die was cast, and the horrible

incident had happened when he returned to the mosque!

4) Ibn Muḥam was taken to Imam Hasan (A.S.) for the execution of retaliation. Addressing the Holy Imam the cruel murderer said: "Will you dispatch me abroad to kill Mu'āwiyah? He is your mortal enemy. They will kill me after his death, and thus I have actually received the legal punishment you intend to exert on me. In case I remain alive and survive this peril, I promise to return and undergo the trial or the legitimate retaliation. "Imam Hassan (A.S.) did not accept his proposal, and refused to foster terrorism by consent to such an agreement.

PART VII

1 Al-Majlisī, vol. 42,p.295.

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TRANSLITERATION

Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration
ا	a	خ	kh	د	d	ز	z
ب	b	ذ	dh	ط	t	م	m
پ	p	ذ	dh	ظ	ẓ	ن	n
ت	t	ر	r	ع	'	و (عربی)	w
اَ اِ اُ (عربی)	ā, ī, u (عربی)	ز	z	غ	gh	و (فارسی)	v
ث	th	ح	zh	ف	f	و (معدوله)	"
ج	j	س	s	ق	q	هـ	h
چ	ch	ش	sh	ک	k	اَ اِ اُ (غير ملفوظ)	ā, ī, u
ح	h	س	s	گ	g	ی	y

Vowels		Diphthongs		Diphthongs	
اَ	a	اَو	aw	اِی	ay
اِ	i	اَوو	aww	اِی	ayy
اُ	u	اَوو	uw(ow)	اِی	iy
آ	ā	اَوو	urw(oww)	اِی	iyy
ای	ī				
او	ū				

عليه السلام، عليها السلام، عليهما السلام و عليهم السلام : A.S. for *عليه* عليه وآله : S.A.W. *ibn* (b.) for ابن، *bin* for بنت، *al-* (l-) for *الـ*¹

* In the case of the Arabic definite article "al", the letter "l" is assimilated to the letters known as *al-hurūf al-shamsiyya*: هـ، ط، ظ، ث، ذ، س، ص، ش، ز، د، ذ، ذ، ذ، ذ. Thus *al-shams*, *al-Rasūl* and *al-thamar* become *ash-shams*, *ar-Rasūl* and *ash-thamar*. Since these forms are less commonly followed in English books, the formal 'al-' has been retained, thus *al-shams*, not *ash-shams*, *al-Rasūl* not *ar-Rasūl* and *al-thamar* not *ash-thamar*.

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